"A"-19-14

747 The poverty of the country prevents the development of
794 organized private effort to assist the needy. The only such efforts--albeit sporadical--are those of the churches, which have always been centers of social assistance as well as of spiritual life. The impoverishment of the churches after World War II caused most of these projects to disappear so that today church welfare activities are restricted to the community, and local parish priests have meager funds, but funds which are continuously being given to assist those of the parish who are in need.

745 In Hungary public effort to assist the needy was always considerable. The pre-war social security system of Hungary was one of the first in Europe, and it served as a model for many other countries. The Communists have extended the coverage to large masses, but under their rule the economic status of the country worsened and the actual social security benefits depreciated along with incomes so that they do not represent any real defence for the individual against financial disaster.

The number of persons covered by the social security system, presently being administered by the Trade Union Federation, is almost 6 million, approximately 60 per cent of the entire population. The most important benefits are: paid vacations; the coverage of medical

9: Eppstein S-4 (no date) 1945 EC1 Hungary EC1

The Church is one of the largest landowners and one of the richest institutions generally in Hungary. Besides the Archbishops and the Bishoprics, many of the monasteries have received vast endowments from kings and other pious persons. The leading order is the Benedictine, whose chief house at Pannonhalma, in West Hungary, is an 'Arch-Abbey', not subject to the jurisdiction of any bishop. The Cistercians, Franciscans and Piarists also possess many monasteries. All education in Hungary was in the hands of the Church up to modern times, and these four Orders still conduct a large number of secondary schools. A considerable proportion of the primary schools are also 'confessional', that is, parochial schools.

There is a rather wide gap between the higher and the lower Catholic clergy. The village priests are relatively poorly paid and have to live modestly. Nevertheless, they enjoy much esteem, and rightly, for they are a devoted and well-educated body of men.

THE PROTESTANTS. Considering the position held by the Roman Catholic religion, it may seem strange that the confession which is commonly regarded as the most 'national', and which is nicknamed the 'Magyar faith', should be not the Catholic, but, on the contrary, the Calvinist. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries nearly the whole country was converted to Protestantism, the German colonists and a few others adopting the Lutheran confession, while most of the Magyars followed the doctrines of Calvin.

In the seventeenth century West Hungary, which was then under the direct rule of the Habs-

423
794 One other aspect of Government policy affected the churches and that was the land reform. The pre-war distribution of land had followed the feudal pattern: 48.1 per cent. of all the agricultural land being held by a small percentage of landlords, not exceeding 0.8 per cent. of the total landowners. The Catholic Church was one of the large estate owners, being in possession of 900,000 acres, or of nearly 4 per cent. of the total agricultural land. While 756 large landowners owned estates in excess of 1,400 acres, a total of 3,850,000 acres; 4,350,000 acres was owned by 1,382,863 smallholders, each with under 15 acres; and 3,000,000 peasants, out of a total population of 9,000,000, owned no land at all. All estates over 280 acres were taken over by the State under the land reform, among them the estates of the churches, and divided up among the most needy. This proved of benefit to the poor parish priests too, for they received a total of 27,500 acres.

The effect of this on the Catholic Church was, of course, considerable, and the resentment that this measure caused among the higher clergy had a great deal to do with subsequent developments.

Despite the Government's attitude the Catholic Church officially was hostile from the very beginning. The bishops went a long way to define their attitude in a Pastoral Letter issued on May 24, 1945, in which they said that "the scourge of war has swept the country like a wild fury and left behind nothing but devastation and destruction. We have witnessed one of the greatest catastrophes in the history of our nation," but had no word to say of thanksgiving or gratitude for the country's liberation although they did go so far as to say: "The rumours that the Red Army would destroy all the churches did not come true. We even met with some consideration in ecclesiastical matters." But the bulk of what they had to say was quite otherwise—"respect for authority is about to break down," "innocent men are being arrested,"† "Whosoever infringes the innate rights of man, such as . . . the right of private property . . . should be aware that we, the Bishops of Hungary, will raise our voices . . . the Rights of Man . . . have been given by God Himself. Hence no power on earth can change or abolish them." There then came a strong attack on the agrarian reform: "this regulation threatens the very existence of ecclesiastical institutions by depriving them of their material foundations." "Liberty," they warned, "does not mean the unleashing of low and greedy impulses and the lust for power." "We are facing the future," they said, "with the greatest anxiety."

† This can refer only to collaborators.

14: Evans S-3 (1950) 1953 EC1 Hungary EC1
P9

Mindszenty

Shortly after this frank declaration the Prince Primate of Esztergom, Cardinal Serédi, died and was replaced by a legitimist of long standing, József Mindszenty, who shortly afterwards was also made a Cardinal. This event itself was used to show the way in which, in future, Hungarian Church news was to be treated internationally, the Vatican issuing a statement to the effect that Mindszenty *might* not be allowed to go to Rome to take his cardinalate, and the Press in the western countries stating that he *had* not been allowed to go to Rome. He did, of course, go and, as later events proved, used the opportunity, through the agency of Cardinal Van Roey, of Belgium, to get in touch with Otto von Hapsburg.

From this moment on the new Cardinal endeavoured to mobilise the Church against the new Hungary, and his aims in doing so were made abundantly clear during his subsequent trial. He condemned every action taken by the People's Government and, in his pastoral letters, called on his followers to do likewise. His first pastoral letter was an open attack on the Hungarian Government and an open alliance with another country. "We feel bound," he said, "to say openly that a Christian citizen cannot possibly vote for a programme which advocates a new oppression, a new terror regime and the abolition of Natural Law. We regret that we have to agree entirely with the statement of the British Foreign Secretary that it seemed that in Hungary one totalitarian dictatorship was merely being replaced by another one."

The Cardinal's freedom to publish this sort of thing is the only answer it needs. But this was by no means all. He attacked the Government for assisting the occupying Power (the U.S.S.R.); he said that the "present merely temporary Government of Hungary has by far overstepped its power and competence" (this for allowing divorce); he attacked the agrarian reform, which he said was based "on a hateful spirit of vengeance"; and he tried to undermine confidence in the Government by saying: "It is true the expropriated landowners are promised some compensation but this pledge is not likely to materialise." He finished with the wild conclusion: "Do not be intimidated by the threats of those Sons of Evil," and added:

"The less opposition they meet the greater is the growth of compulsion and violence. It is in the nature of such a compulsory system, too, that it loosens the bond of marriage and lets Youth decay to-day. The next day it ensures that this libertinism is established for good and the day after men will have lost any sense of chivalry and honesty and, like wild beasts, will assault defenceless women to satisfy their passions."

794 659 It is not possible to draw any conclusion from this first pastoral other than that its wild and irresponsible author did not propose to allow the Hungarian Government to live at peace with him and was prepared to wreck the Catholic Church if need be, while he vented his personal political hatred of the new social system of the country.

The Cardinal maintained his initial form and lost no opportunity to attack the Government. When the Allies signed the Peace Treaty with Hungary, he led the bishops in an attack on the Treaty (" the Treaty overloads our country with burdens and must be considered unfair and even unjust "); rejecting especially the cession of Transylvania to Rumania. He again 871 attacked when it was proposed that the fantastic system of compulsory religious instruction in schools (which compelled, *e.g.*, Marxist parents to decide whether their children should be brought up as Catholics, Calvinists or Lutherans) should be brought to an end. When elections came in 1947, the Catholics were warned that they could not vote for socialists of any kind, and immediately afterwards the Cardinal opposed the expulsion of Germans, largely on the grounds that they were Catholics, and in a pastoral at the end of the year he forbade Catholic teachers and parents to accept the use of new school textbooks teaching evolution and spoke of the circulation in schools of " pamphlets propagating masturbation." It is perhaps unnecessary to add that these pamphlets had no existence. One of the saddest features of the whole Mindszenty affair is the way in which the Archbishop's mind was so obviously preoccupied with questions of sex.

659 All these attacks, however, were mild compared with the 871 attack he led against the Government when it introduced into the Assembly a motion for the nationalisation of schools. Such 794 a motion was bound to be produced at some stage, just as it had been years before in other countries. In most Western States the schools and education have long since been considered to be the business of the State, but in Hungary, before 1945, there was a total of 4,564 denominational schools in which 650,000 children were taught: 2,797 of these schools were owned and controlled by the Catholic Church. As late as 1947 out of 2,908 elementary schools only 934 were not controlled by churches. This state of affairs was not only tolerated but approved by the Horthy regime because it was in line with its policy of keeping the educational standards of the peasants and workers as low as possible, in order to have available a supply of cheap labour.

A situation now arose when the people's Government was already paying for the schools and could hardly tolerate that it should pay for schools in which the Cardinal forbade modern scientific education, and instead used the schools for

14: Evans S-3 (1950) 1953 EC1 Hungary EC1
RH

propaganda against the Government. All Catholics who supported the nationalisation were threatened with excommunication in a pastoral letter of May 17, 1948; but by this threat the Cardinal forced a development of the situation which bore fruit at a later stage in that he compelled the latent Catholic opposition to his own policy to come into the open and conferences of Catholic teachers were called to oppose the policy of the Cardinal.

Since it was the proposal to nationalise the schools that compelled all the churches to define their attitudes, it is right at this juncture to go back and consider the third factor in the situation, the attitude of the Protestants.

Bishop Bereczky

The man who was destined to become the leader of Hungarian Calvinism (the Reformed Church) at this period was Albert Bereczky, and it is important that his attitude should be understood. He himself states it quite clearly in his contribution to *Five Years of Hungarian Protestantism*, 1945-1950:

"A terrible anxiety was growing in me, beginning with the thirties, that we were living in an awful deception which would lead to catastrophic consequences. The outbreak of the war realised my forebodings. I was sure that Nazism, after an unforeseeable course of disasters, would lose, and, in my sleepless nights, I saw the opening of an abyss which would engulf the whole nation and the church which had become like the salt which had lost its savour. Those who did not feel this anguish—yet how little it was to feel only this—will never understand what liberation meant. To put it bluntly: for those who found no fault with the years before or even during the war, nothing else happened but defeat, disaster and judgment. There were many such people, even among believing Christians. Why, it was possible to lead, individually, a good Christian life, to maintain one's fellowship with Jesus Christ, and even more, it was possible to gather these pious individuals into pious groups and to be, at the same time, completely oblivious to the fact that lots of money could be made by owning tenement houses in the Párkány Street, in which small rooms served as 'houses' to 14-15 members of three-four families, in an environment of such physical, mental and spiritual destitution that it would have taken the coarsest hypocrisy to demand of these people that they be 'Christians.' And there were many Párkány Streets in those days!

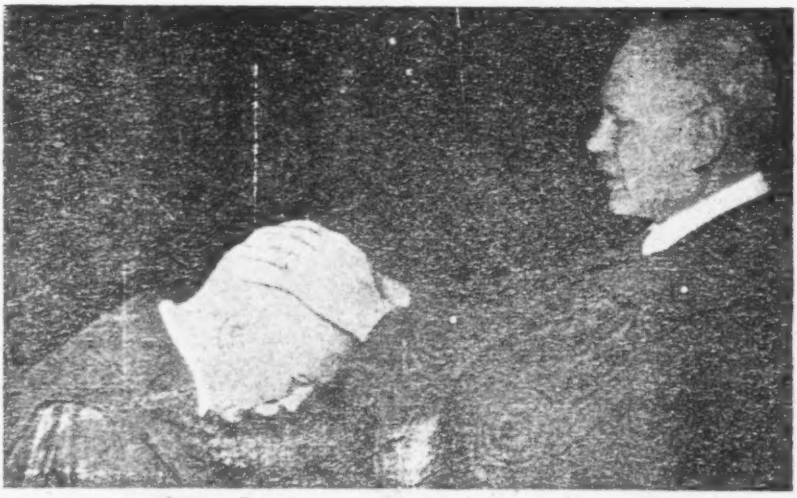
"There were hundreds of thousands of rural proletarians on the Great Plain whose staple food throughout the winter was but beetroot that is only fit to be fed to the cattle. Yet how many a time did the account of their poverty fall on deaf ears? It was my great sin that, while seeing all this, I was content to dole out that charity that we were able to give and to administer drops of

659 ointment instead of exposing my mind to the full impact of what
794 I knew to be true; this society, with a large part of its peasants reduced to beggary, with its workers trying to break the chains of poverty, with its empty-headed and frivolous middle class and conceited politicians, was doomed.

" The outbreak of the war made me realise, with benumbing clearness, that the disaster would not be avoided. And yet there was a church in the midst of this nation, with a wonderful past, an unworthy heir of the Reformation, a church that had no eyes to see and no ears to hear, a church that was passively withdrawing, even in her best members, from that inevitable social transformation that was irresistibly drawing near through the debacle of war. The large majority of the church members had an aversion even to thoroughgoing individual piety—yet how far a cry this was from Christians identifying themselves in humble repentance with that people to which they belonged.

" My forebodings of utter annihilation were made complete by that awful symbol which seemed to take shape in the organised persecution of the Jews. . . . As a matter of fact it was this organised persecution which first awakened in the Church the consciousness of corporate responsibility. Yet how slow and reluctant was this awakening! . . . May I add now that this fight was constantly confused and hampered by that bad conscience which our Church leaders had, owing to their blindness as to social problems in previous decades. . . .

" Yet the inexorable trend of events shattered all our efforts. It was quite late, in the first months of 1944, that I realised that the fight must be carried on for the survival of the entire Hungarian nation, and the Church must directly enter the ranks of that underground resistance which had come into being during this time of cruel persecution."



Consecration of Bishop Bereczky.

659 87 [793] It was the man who thought like this that emerged as the outstanding leader of the Reformed Church after the war and who became Bishop of Budapest. He was ably seconded by János Péter, later elected to the largest Reformed See, that of Debrecen. When, therefore, the question of school nationalisation was raised the leadership of the Hungarian Reformed Church decided that this was not one of " faith " and not one on which a fundamental dispute between Church and State would be right. It was, therefore, prepared to compromise and the resulting Church-State agreement is sufficiently important to be given in full. It was signed on October 7, 1948.

The Agreement

659 • 794 The Government of the Hungarian Republic and the delegated Committee of the Synodal Council of the Hungarian Reformed Church, in order to arrive at a peaceful and correct settlement of the questions which affect the relations between the State and the Church, have made the following agreement:—

1. With the view of a new regulation of the Church position in the Hungarian Republic, the Government of the Hungarian Republic and the Hungarian Reformed Church will appoint a permanent Joint Commission to present, for enactment, a draft of new laws affecting religious matters, particularly those concerning the religion of children. The necessary modifications in church policy, according to the new national Act concerning religious matters, will be enacted by the legislation of the Church.

2. The Government of the Hungarian Republic declares in this instance also that the Legislation and Government of the Hungarian Republic has ensured, defended and, by Act 33 of 1947, significantly enlarged the free exercise of religion and, by contributing to the personal and real expenditure of the Church, has rendered possible the maintenance of the present framework of the Church's life.

3. The Government of the Hungarian Republic regards the following activities, according to existing legal relations, as pertaining to the free function of church life; the holding of divine services in church buildings or in other suitable public buildings, in homes and in open spaces, the holding of Bible classes in church buildings, in schools, in private homes, in church halls; the colportage of Bibles and tractates; the holding of congregational or national church conferences, evangelistic meetings, the compulsory religious instruction in public schools and the charitable work of the church. To this end it permits the free use of class rooms and other suitable premises of public schools, wherever this may be necessary, outside regular school hours, subject to agreement with the

659 794 school authority and with the obligation of paying for any damage which may occur owing to the Church's use of these premises for divine services, Sunday schools, Bible classes, choir meetings and other religious church meetings and gatherings, until such times as the congregations are able to acquire their own buildings for these purposes.

The Government of the Hungarian Republic furthermore regards the autonomous exercise of church jurisdiction as pertaining to the free function of church life, within the limits and in the manner in which this activity is regulated by the church laws approved by the Head of the State for the time being.

4. The Government of the Hungarian Republic takes cognisance of and honours that obligation of the Hungarian Reformed Church which, according to the command of Christ and her Confessions, pledges her to exhort the believers to charity and especially to the care of the poor, the lonely, orphans and the aged. It therefore secures the right to the maintenance and development of charitable institutions and the collection of charitable offerings, within the bounds of existing legal regulations.

5. The Government of the Hungarian Republic takes cognisance of the expressed intention of the Reformed Church to realise the principle of "a Free Church in a Free State."

During the time of the transition, in the course of which the Reformed Church will develop her material resources, the Government of the Hungarian Republic declares its readiness to pay State subsidies on the following conditions:

(a) The Hungarian Republic ensures for five years the payment of State subsidies for the maintenance of church personnel (from June 30, 1948, to December 31, 1953) on the existing basis which is assessed in relation to the scale for civil servants. This figure of State aid for salaries will be reduced as from January 1, 1954, by 25 per cent. and the Government guarantees payment of the remaining 75 per cent. until December 31, 1958. From January 1, 1959, until December 31, 1963, 50 per cent. of the present State subsidy will be paid, then from January 1, 1964, until December 31, 1968, 25 per cent. of it, and on December 31, 1968, all State support will cease.

(b) The Government ensures the yearly payment of 10 per cent. of the existing subsidy for personnel as State support for extraordinary expenses.

(c) The Government of the Hungarian Republic will continue to pay solely for the purposes of the construction, reconstruction and maintenance of church buildings, church halls and parsonages as well as for the furnishing of these structures, the sum assigned for one year of that real subsidy

659 teaching salaries of their members and there is no doubt that, 871 left to themselves, they would gladly have accepted the contracts. It is worth adding that the Catholic Church was accepting the usual subsidies from the Government.

794 Then, in December, 1948, events took a new turn when 659 Cardinal Mindszenty and six others were arrested and charged with treason, espionage and currency offences. It is not possible to discuss the trial in detail here (see *The Trial of Cardinal Mindszenty*, by S. G. Evans) except to say that it had nothing to do with the church situation, although, of course, it reacted on the situation by its effect on Catholic opinion. The Hungarian Government had indisputable evidence as to the conspiracy for the reinstatement of the Hapsburg monarchy and the old regime, if necessary by foreign armed intervention and a third world war, and those involved in the conspiracy were brought to trial before an open court at which the world's press was represented.

The charges were amply substantiated, as readers, for example, of *The Times* reports on the trial could see, and the final judgments stretched the law on the side of mercy.

Perhaps the outstanding result of the trial was the revelation to an increasing number of the Catholic clergy as to how badly they had been led and the feelings thus generated burst into the open with a National Congress of Catholic Priests on August 1, 1950. The call to this meeting was widely responded to by parochial clergy, who had long needed an opportunity to express their views on ecclesiastical policy.

Peace Conference of Catholic priests.

659 A high percentage of priests had for some time viewed with
●794 misgivings the hostile attitude adopted by their leaders to the young People's Republic. They expressed their desire to come to an agreement with the State, and declared openly that they were on the side of peace and for the rebuilding of the country.

[575] As a result the National Committee of Catholic Priests for the Defence of Peace was formed and the Congress also played its part in stimulating the extremely important Church-State Agreement of August 30 which was signed jointly by the Minister of Religion and Public Education and by the Archbishop of Kalocsa on behalf of the Bench of Bishops.

Catholic Agreement

The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic and the Bench of Hungarian Catholic Bishops, desiring to ensure the peaceful co-existence of the State and the Catholic Church and so to promote the unity of the Hungarian people in its work of peaceful reconstruction and to further the peaceful development of our country have, after discussion, come to the following agreement:

I

1. The members of the Bench of Bishops recognise and, in accordance with their duty as citizens, support the State of the Hungarian People's Republic and its Constitution. They declare that according to the rules of the Church they will take proceedings against any ecclesiastical persons who act against the laws of the Hungarian People's Republic and the constructive work of the Government.

2. The Bench of Bishops condemns all kinds of subversive activities directed against the State and the social laws of the Hungarian People's Republic. It announces that it will not permit the exploitation of the religious feelings of the congregations of the Catholic Church for anti-State political purposes.

3. The Bench of Bishops asks the Catholic congregations, as citizens and as patriots, to participate with all their strength in the great work which the whole Hungarian nation is doing under the leadership of the People's Republic, in fulfilling the Five-Year Plan and raising the standard of living for the [423] realisation of social justice. The Bench of Bishops urges the clergy in particular not to resist the development of the agricultural co-operative movement, as such a voluntary co-operation is based upon the moral principle of human solidarity.

794 4. The Bench of Bishops supports the peace movement and
208 it approves the efforts of the Hungarian people, and of the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic, to defend peace. It condemns all instigation to war, condemns the use

194 of atomic weapons and therefore considers the Government
208 which first uses the atom bomb as guilty of a crime against humanity.

II

[illegible] 1. The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic,
659 in accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic, ensures absolute freedom of religion to the Catholic congregations, and also ensures freedom of activity to the Catholic Church.

[871] 2. The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic approves the return of eight church schools (six boys' schools and two girls' schools) to the Catholic Church and will also see that in all these Catholic schools there are an adequate number of male and female teachers belonging to the religious orders.

3. The Government of the Hungarian People's Republic will provide for the financial needs of the Catholic Church in the spirit already agreed with other religious denominations in such a way that for 18 years, *i.e.*, until the Catholic Church can cover its financial needs from its own resources, it will grant sums decreasing in a proportion every three and five years respectively. Within the framework of the financial aid the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic will lay special stress on ensuring a suitable living wage for the clergy.

To carry out the above agreement a mixed committee shall be formed composed of delegates of the Government of the Hungarian People's Republic and the Bench of Bishops.

Visit to Hungary

A visit to Hungary in the autumn of 1950 provided an opportunity to meet a number of Hungary's church leaders and to get a personal impression of the situation as it is to-day, and it should be said at once that the result was one overall general and inescapable conclusion: that Hungary's church leaders and church people were not perpetually preoccupied with the question of Church-State relations but with making the best provision for dealing with the overwhelming opportunities to do their proper work which were now open to them.

It was typical of the situation that glancing at the local press in the historic Calvinist town of Debrecen there should appear in prominent positions two statements from leaders of the Reformed Church, on this occasion saying that they gladly took part in the local elections because they wanted to support peace and demo-
[563] cracy and the abolition of exploitation. Debrecen also has a Jewish paper.

874 students whose rooms showed the customary diverse interests of of youth—in learning, sport and the girl at home. Their opportunities of learning here are considerable because, apart from lectures, the library is quite outstanding and is as well equipped with modern literature as it is with Calvin and De Beza first editions and early Hungarian Bibles.

[793]
[575]

Bishop János Péter, member of the World Council of Peace.

794 One of the most outstanding achievements of the Hungarian 204 Protestant Churches is their Church Press. They run separate church newspapers but they maintain a combined Church Press Office which issues periodical bulletins in English and German but whose most important work is the regular supply of church news to all the Hungarian Press both national and local. The Reformed Church itself has a number of papers; its weekly *Az Ut* (The Way) has a 12,000 edition, the fortnightly *Református Egyház* (The Reformed Church) prints 2,000, and for the work of evangelisation there is the 32-page *Református Krónika* (Reformed Chronicle). There are other similar papers such as the Debrecen *Vasárnap* (Sunday). Two bulletins are also published: the *Church Courier* and *Hungarian Church Press*.
[1 i.e. Calvin College in Budapest--Analyst]

214 Papers, of course, are not the only publishing activity. Bibles
794 are published by the Bible Committee of the Hungarian Protestant Churches. In 1949 they disposed of 30,000 Bibles. In 1950 it was 15,000 up till the end of August, the rate of distribution slowing down as people are now awaiting a new translation on which an Old Testament Committee is working, the New Testament being nearly completed. (The current translation is of 1911.) Again 30,000 hymn books were distributed in 1949 and more than 15,000 by September, 1950. Books and pamphlets are published in considerable quantities, Turneiser's *Cry of the Soul* is one of the more recent. Separate school text books have been published for each of the eight school classes. The Church Calendar is produced in 55,000 copies; *Az Utitáes* (The Companion) is issued as a guide to daily Bible reading; Karl Barth's *Dogmatics* and *Gospel and Law* have been issued, as have works by Bereczky and Péter; there was a special pamphlet on the Holy Year and another against anti-semitism.

794 The Protestant Churches also attach considerable importance
[207] to the broadcasting time which is allotted to them. The Reformed Church has a fortnightly half-hour and every eighth week it broadcasts a full mission service. Its leaders also broadcast from time to time on other programmes. Since October they have also been given a half hour in both Hungarian and English on the short-wave programmes. Other churches have equivalent facilities although in October, 1950, the Catholics were still not availing themselves of their time.

The Reformed Church also has its own charity service and maintains 12 homes for orphans, four homes for old people, one home for epileptics, a mental hospital and a nursing home. These institutions are run by the central administration of the church. There are also others run by its local bodies. A special Sunday at the end of October was devoted to collections in all churches for the maintenance of these institutions. Every district church also maintains a church institute.

795 The situation in the Lutheran Church was explained by Bishop Dezséry, the successor to Bishop Ordass. The Lutherans, he said, have about 500,000 people. They are organised in four districts, each with a bishop. There are 21 deacons and 320 congregations. The largest is Budapest with 75,000 people. It is essentially a " diaspora " church (that is to say, scattered) and in remote places simply organised into pastoral circles.

874 The Lutheran Theological College is at Sopron and has about 100 students, 15 of whom were new this year. It runs a five-year course but is considering reducing it to four years. Latin, Greek
794 and Hebrew are compulsory. Lutheran publications include the
204 weekly *Evangélikus Elet* (Lutheran Life) 12,000 copies, the monthly *Lélek Pástos* (The Pastor) for pastors, and a weekly

p. 25

evangelical magazine *Elö Viz* (Living Water). They are con- 794
sidering the publication of a new monthly magazine for con- [204]
gregational work.

The great need of the moment is for cantors as most of their church cantors were school teachers who abandoned their church singing when they entered the employ of the State. This would seem to indicate that when they were in church employ they did the singing as an act of necessity rather than from free choice. As to politics, all the Lutheran pastors, said the bishop, were in favour of peace but not all work for it, although the bishops have given them a lead. "Christians and Communists," he said, "can work together. The peace movement shows it." As to 779
influences in thinking, Barthianism was still strong although not [177]
as strong as among the Reformed. Some think his influence cannot be reconciled to the Augustinian Confession* although the bishop himself regarded this confessionalism as retrograde in the modern situation. Other European influences are Ragaz and Kutter, although their influence is waning and the present situation with its new tasks needed new thought. Naturally pastors were now reading socialist works and a number of articles and lectures and conferences show the effect this has had on their thinking. This was not, nevertheless, regarded as a primary task in the [573]
present situation, in which there were so many practical tasks to solve in which theology had a good deal to say, one such being anti-semitism, which was not yet eradicated although the policy of the State was having its effect.

Ordass had been convinced that Western bourgeois democracy 794
was right for Christianity and had been sharply opposed to the socialist direction of the country's policy.‖ He had had a considerable influence in the Lutheran Church but by now the greater part of the pastors could see that the church was developing under the present State and that they are now getting a new relationship with the people. In this matter of Ordass, the Lutheran World Federation had, he thought, been an instrument of American policy. Ordass had eventually been deposed by the Church which had petitioned the Government for his release.

Attending Catholic services, visiting Esztergom, and meeting a 795
number of priests associated with the Catholic Priests' Peace 659
Committee showed a vigorous continuation of the life of the Catholic Church. The symbol of the Catholic Peace Committee, a white cross on a blue ground with a dove at the foot shows a relationship which is far from being inappropriate and which, however long it took to come is now powerfully grounded.† The effect of the Church-State agreement is also symbolised by the 346
buildings at Esztergom where the vast and rather pretentious

* One of the basic documents of Lutheranism.

‖ Bishop Ordass' trial for currency offences is discussed on p. 17.

† By December, 1952, 3,000 of the total of 4,000 priests were members.

346 cathedral built between 1822 and 1869 in imitation of St. Peter's, Rome, dominates the City; the Franciscan buildings had been nationalised, now they are returned to the Church, while the nunnery, on the other hand, has become a State school. The seminary is busy training Catholic priests and the Palace of the Prince Primate is inhabited by nuns, two vicars and church offices although uniformed retainers and cars are still in evidence.

659 The dissolution of certain religious orders was agreed at the 792 time of the Church-State discussions as was the continued existence of the Franciscans, the Benedictines, the Piarists, and the Hungarian Poor Sisters of Our Lady. Monks of dissolved orders have become secular priests while the lay brothers have mainly become school teachers. Each of the remaining orders has two houses, except the Franciscans who have three.

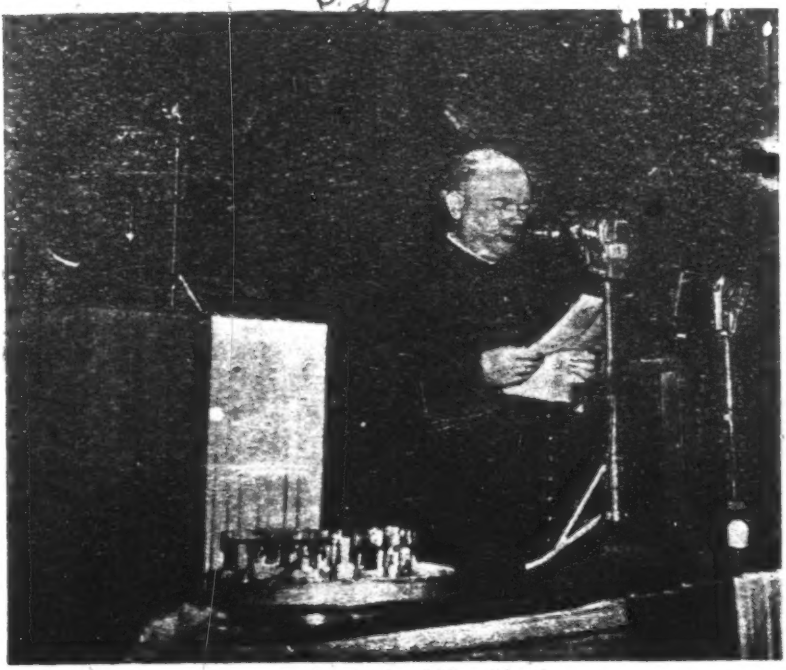
Christians and Peace

[795] More than anything else, perhaps, it is the movement for peace which has paved the way for the co-operation of all the 794 churches in Hungary, not only with the Government but with the 208 Communists. As the movement has developed more and more 575 Christians have come into it. This was abundantly demonstrated in May, 1950, with the beginning of the collection of signatures for the Stockholm Peace Petition. Immediately after this the Reformed Church sent a message to the World Council of Churches pleading with it to take a stand for peace and, at the same time a letter was sent to all its parishes urging the clergy to take part in the peace movement; the Unitarians called on all their ministers to work against war; Catholic priests began to make statements for the Peace Movement, whereas the bishops opposed their participation. In June came the Hungarian Peace Congress with strong Protestant participation and some Catholic. Then came the Cathlic Priests' Peace Conference, already noted, and the Church-State agreement which led the Secretary of the Catholic Priests' Peace Committee, Fr. Richard Horváth, to say:

"This agreement proves that those who initiated the Catholic Priests' Peace Movement were right. The movement has helped in bringing about the agreement and, thus, the long wished-for desire of millions is realised. With this agreement we have made a great step forward in strengthening internal peace.

"We promise to support the Bench of Bishops so that they can fulfil the agreement—which serves the best interests of our people and their spiritual welfare—with the best possible results. We express our thanks to, and our confidence in, the Government for its goodwill and understanding of the interests of the Catholic Church, and towards the workers' loyalty to faith, and respect for traditions. We again declare that we shall continue to do our duty as citizens with enthusiasm and unselfishness."

14: Evans S-3 (1950) 1953 EC1 Hungary EC1



Father Richard Horváth.

Both Catholics and Protestants protested to the Security Council against the bombing of civilians in Korea. At the World Peace Congress there were substantial Catholic and Protestant delegations, the Catholic being led by Fr. Horváth and the Protestant by Bishop Péter of Debrecen and Bishop Dezséry of the Lutherans. At the same time the Protestants issued a peace appeal to the Christians of the world; in January the Catholic paper *Uj Ember* (New People) expressed its approval of the Peace Law as did *A Kereszt* (The Cross)* the new weekly paper of the Catholic Priests' Peace Committee and the Lutheran Bishops issued a joint pastoral on Peace.

Recent Developments

Since that time there have been a number of developments of general interest.

In May, 1951, a new law was passed creating a State Office for Church Affairs charged with dealing with all relations between the Churches and the State. No new principle was involved in this measure because the Minister of Education had previously held the responsibility for dealing with such matters. The creation of the new department recognised that the churches were independent and ought not to be confused with questions such as education which were directly the province of the State, and at the same time, by creating a Minister responsible solely for relations between State and Church, it assured that these relations

* Other Catholic periodicals are the bulletin *Magyar-Kurir* (Hungarian Courier) and the monthly *Vigilea*.

14: Evans S-3 (1950) 1953 ECI Hungary ECI

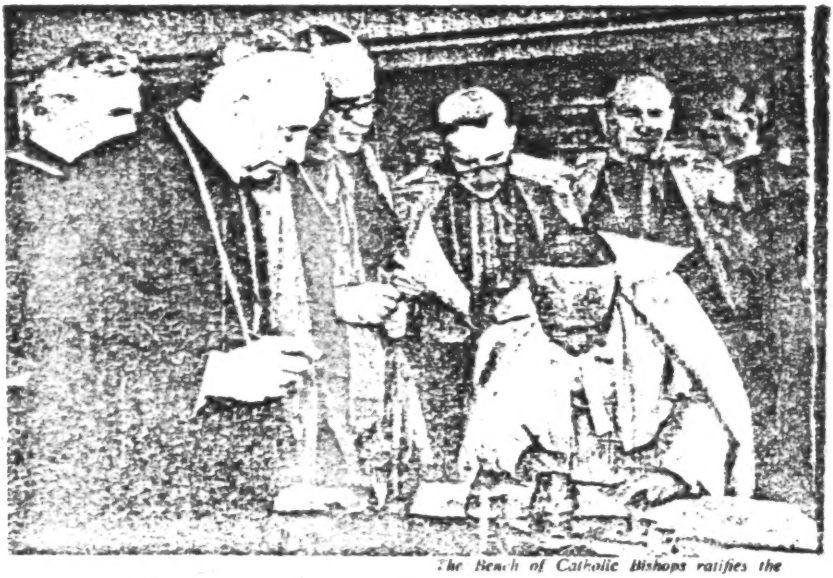
•794
659
[645]
[193]
[687]

would receive the attention they deserved. The department has since brought the Catholic clergy into the National Insurance scheme and has also facilitated the creation of church co-operative stores for the sale of church literature, vestments and furnishings.

The next development was an unhappy one. The Archbishop of Kalocsa, Jozsef Grösz, who had succeeded Mindszenty in the leadership of the Catholic Church in Hungary, and eight others, were brought to trial, found guilty and sentenced, for continuing the Mindszenty conspiracy. Once again the evidence was overwhelming and the contention of those who had held that Mindszenty and his accomplices had only confessed what they knew the prosecution knew, was abundantly proved when it transpired that Grösz had been entrusted by Mindszenty with the task of continuing his subversive work in the event of his being arrested.

This trial of a second leader of the Catholic Church was obviously a profound shock to the Bench of Bishops and in July, under the presidency of Dr. Czapik, the Archbishop of Eger, they issued unanimously the following statement:

The Hungarian Bench of Bishops—following the principles of the Catholic faith, and obeying the commands of God, according to which we should be dutiful citizens and respect the laws of the country in which we live, as they do not oblige us to deny the laws of God—make the following statement:—



The Bench of Catholic Bishops ratifies the

P. 28

14: Evans S-3 (1950) 1953 EC1 Hungary EC1

794
659

(1) We declare that we recognise the Hungarian State, the Hungarian People's Republic, as our beloved homeland, that we abide by its laws and that we would have others abide by them.

(2) Following the same principle, we condemn every endeavour and every action whatsoever aimed against the People's Republic and its security, which employs violent and unlawful means—no matter by whom it is led. In particular we condemn and stigmatise those ecclesiastics whose criminal activities have been revealed in the last few days.

(3) We declare that we honour our agreement with the Hungarian People's Republic more strictly than ever and that, by virtue of our ecclesiastical laws, we shall take disciplinary action against all those ecclesiastics found guilty of offending against the laws of the Hungarian People's Republic.

We support the endeavours of the Hungarian Government which is defending peace and seeking to protect our homeland against war. Therefore, in accordance with our vocation, we shall foster peace; and in the spirit of our church we approve of the peace movement of Catholic priests. We solemnly appeal to everyone to adopt our statement and to contribute to its implementation.

Agreement with the Hungarian People's Republic.

793 The Bishops took the oath of allegiance to the Republic and
659 also appealed to parishes to offer some of their church lands to
794 the State. On its side the State also took action and on July 3 the Presidential Council passed a decree, to be retrospective in its effects as far back as January 1, 1946, to the effect that Archbishops, Titular Bishops, Bishops, Suffragan Bishops, Abbots-in-Chief, Abbots and Provincials of Monastic Orders could only be appointed on Hungarian territory with the prior assent of the Presidential Council.

659 The rebuilding of churches has continued steadily and, in
794 addition to that, new churches are being built in the entirely new
[361] towns and villages which are the fruit of Hungary's planned
[214] development. Equally striking is the continued growth of church publications and in this field the appearance of the first volumes both of the Old Testament and of the New, of the new translation of the Bible, a new Hungarian-Greek New Testament dictionary, a new Lutheran Psalter and the first translation into Hungarian of Luther's smaller catechism, are outstanding.

The peace movement within the churches grows all the time. The Catholic Priests' Peace Committee, now officially supported by the Bishops, holds ever larger conferences and now has the support of a majority of the churches. The Protestant Churches constitute more and more a challenge to the present direction of Western Christianity in general and the World Council of Churches in particular.

Bishop Lajos Vetö asks all religious people to work for peace.

794
304

Some of the numerous church papers published in Hungary

14: Evans S-3 (1950) 1953 ECl Hungary ECl

P. 32

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Hungary Ecl

651 to meet the levies. When a farmer succeeded in doing so, he
423 found that he was forced to sell his surplus at prices fixed by the government; and these were so low that he was unable to make both ends meet and was forced into bankruptcy. Foreclosures became the rule.

659 By the close of 1948, the Catholic Church in Hungary had
794 lost its wealth and material independence. To its other losses of this character must be added the elimination of revenues from the system of advowson, an economic survival from the Middle Ages. This arrangement made it legally incumbent upon stipulated wealthy patrons, and upon cities and towns, abbeys and foundations, to contribute to the support of the Church. Budapest, for example, was partly responsible for
[423] the upkeep of parishes within its boundaries. The 1945 Land Reform Law abolished all rich patrons as a matter of course; but cities and towns kept up the practice of advowson, often with ironical results. Thus in Budapest the patronage committee of the City Council, whose members traditionally had been clerical, very soon took on a Communist hue. This was, however, the committee entrusted under the law with reviewing the list of priests nominated by the Archbishop for appointment to pastorates. The responsibility, therefore, was now transferred to the Communist Party. It took persistent delight in vetoing all nominations of persons it looked upon with disfavor. Slowly, such committees also withdrew financial support. All that then remained to the Church were direct subsidies from the State, so that a relationship of complete financial dependence was established.

659 Meanwhile the fate of religious education was likewise being debated. Prior to 1948 Communist efforts to ban instruction in the tenets of the recognized faiths met with so much resistance that the traditional practices—namely, compulsory religion classes in the public schools and the maintenance of

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Hungary ECI

private schools under Catholic, Protestant, or Jewish auspices 659
—were continued. But after the seizure of power the Minister of Education, Julius Ortutay, presented a four-point program dealing with religious influence in the training of youth. The principal provision was that the private educational system was to be nationalized, though a relatively small number of institutions were suffered to remain under the aegis of Church and Synagogue. Elementary schooling was the main target, but the secondary schools also were grievously affected. The government took over nearly three thousand Catholic grammar schools, and more than a thousand that had been under Calvinist supervision. Church authorities opposed these actions resolutely, but the Ortutay program was adopted by vote of Parliament on June 16, 1948. Therewith Communism won the first round in the struggle for the mind of youth. The advantage was exploited with measures designed to curb and suppress religiously motivated organizations, to curtail the freedom of the press, and to subject to rigorous censorship all that was said in the name of the Church. The charitable institutions, too, were nationalized. Hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged, nurseries—all became the property of the government, which went on to demand that spokesmen for religion sing the praises of the "People's Democratic State."

As usual, a State Office for Ecclesiastical Affairs was established, with full responsibility for regulating the endeavors 659 794 of the Churches. These sought to mitigate their impoverishment by voluntary contributions from the faithful, and their appeal met with a heartening response during the early years after the war; but inflation, the confiscation and nationalization of private property, and the imposition of crushing taxes on the peasantry so drained the resources of the faithful that only a few religious orders and the higher clergy could carry on with what was voluntarily given. It should also be noted that

6: Shuster S-4 (no date) 1954 El Europe
Hungary EC1

659 libraries, art treasures, and furnishings belonging to the
794 Churches were nationalized by a decree of November 16, 1948, so that none of these could be sold. The Constitution of the People's Democracy, which had been ratified on August 20, proclaimed the separation of Church and State. This meant not only that all the ancient privileges of the Catholic Church were abrogated (for example, the Archbishop of Esztergom had been a member of the Regent's Council), but that in all truth two hostile powers had been established in Hungary: atheistic Communism, able to rely on the full might of the civil authority; and organized religion, able to exist only if it were subsidized by the State and if it remained content not to resist any propagandistic attack to which it was subjected. The sole unanswered question was whether under such conditions the Churches could survive and maintain their integrity. The prostitution of the intellectual had been woeful enough, as everyone knows who has studied the history of professors and clergymen cowed by Hitler. Would spokesmen for Christ now become the docile puppets of a ruthless and irreligious regime?

793 In a setting thus compounded of frustration and terror
687 there emerged Joseph, Cardinal Mindszenty, and the drama of his opposition and torment, surely the most moving and widely known episode in the Catholic resistance to Communism. It has, however, perhaps not always been understood. When his name first drew notice outside his own country it was besmirched with the propaganda which laid low so much of the world, in that hour grim in its repudiation of Nazism and unwilling to face the dire possibility that Stalinism might conceivably prove to be still more mighty and no less evil. The Cardinal was widely reputed to be a reactionary busybody, a zealous friend and supporter of the Magyars (all of them of course disreputable), a devotee of Hitler, an arch-clerical